

EDIC has been exciting challenge for our team

AS might be expected, Brexit has remained the top news story for most of us this month. As I write this, it seems likely that some form of extension to Article 50 will be agreed with the EU, but what length or format that might take is just one of the many unknowns remaining in this process. It also remains entirely possible that the UK will end up exiting the EU without a deal agreed.

Whatever the outcome, our contract as a chamber to run the Europe Direct Information Centre (EDIC) for the north Highlands and Islands will be coming to an end. It has been an exciting challenge for our team, with



lots of new information to learn.

Over our time with EDIC we've worked hard to get the message out to businesses about what they can do to prepare for Brexit, most recently through our Brexit Business Breakfast. We've met a range of EU citizens in the area through our presence at the various county shows in the region, and through recent drop-in events at Thurso and Wick libraries, and advised them on their citizens' rights.

Chamber Comment

By Trudy Morris



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It remains important for businesses to prepare for all possibilities, including that of a no-deal Brexit. Although we will no longer have the EDIC contract, the chamber will still be on hand to help and advise businesses in the north Highlands however we can, and there are some key actions businesses can take to prepare.

Any business exporting to the EU should register as soon as possible for an EORI number, and should seek out UK Government advice on how customs and export procedures might change.

For importers, talk to HMRC about transitional simplified procedures and how these can help you deal with any changes to



Caithness Chamber of Commerce has worked hard to tell businesses what they can do to prepare for Brexit.

the import VAT regime. Scotland's public agencies are also on hand to help, with a wide range of advice for all businesses at prepareforbrexit.scot, and agencies such as Skills Development Scotland and Highlands and Islands Enterprise able to offer advice and support on a range of issues.

Those looking to do business in Europe after Brexit will still be able to access opportunities through the Enterprise

Europe Network (tinyurl.com/eeninverness).

We live in interesting times, and I firmly believe that businesses in the north Highlands will meet any new challenges with their usual resilience. Whatever the future holds, Caithness Chamber of Commerce will be here to provide whatever advice and support we can, so don't hesitate to get in touch.

■ Trudy Morris is chief executive of Caithness Chamber of Commerce.